

REMARKS

At the time of the Office Action dated May 23, 2003, claims 1-10 were pending in this application. Applicant acknowledges, with appreciation, the Examiner's allowance of claim 8. Claims 1 and 10 have been amended, and claim 7 has been cancelled. Care has been exercised to avoid the introduction of new matter. Specifically, independent claims 1 and 10 have been amended to include the limitations previously presented in claim 7. Applicant submits that the present Amendment does not generate any new matter issue.

Claims 1-4 and 6-10 are apparently rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) for lack of novelty as evidenced by Gleason et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,914,613 (hereinafter Gleason)

In the second enumerated paragraph of the Office Action, the Examiner asserted that Gleason discloses a semiconductor test apparatus corresponding to that claimed. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant initially notes that independent claims 1 and 10 have been amended to include the limitations previously presented in claim 7. Specifically, claims 1 and 10 now recite that a center section of the reinforcement member has a thickness greater than a thickness of the peripheral portion of the reinforcement member. In the statement of the rejection with regard to claim 7, the Examiner asserted the following:

Regarding claim 7, Gleason et al disclose the reinforcement member (54) has a peripheral section (arm segments 82) having the plurality of mount positions and a central section (forward support 66) formed so as to have a thickness greater than that of the peripheral section (82).

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's assessment of the teachings of Gleason. Specifically, the "arm segments 82" referred to by the Examiner are not arm segments of the

support element 54. Instead, the arm segments 82 are part of the membrane assembly 72 (column 7, lines 10-11), and the Examiner has asserted that the membrane assembly 72 corresponds to the claimed probe card substrate. Therefore, feature 82 cannot be a peripheral section of feature 54.

Furthermore, the cross-section of the support element 54 in Fig. 3 of Gleason clearly shows that the thickness of support element 54 is constant. Thus, the thickness of a central section of the support element 54 is not thicker than a peripheral section of the support element 54, as recited in claims 1 and 10. Applicant, therefore, respectfully submits that Gleason fails to identically describe the claimed invention within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. § 102. Thus, Applicant respectfully solicits withdrawal of the imposed rejection of claims 1-4 and 6-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 for lack of novelty as evidenced by the Gleason.

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 for obviousness based upon Gleason

In the fourth enumerated paragraph of the Office Action, the Examiner concluded that one having ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to modify the test apparatus of Gleason to arrive at the claimed invention. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 5 depends ultimately from independent claim 1, and Applicant incorporates herein the arguments previously advanced in traversing the imposed rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 for lack of novelty as evidenced by Gleason. Specifically, Gleason fails to identically disclose a center section of the reinforcement member has a thickness greater than a thickness of the peripheral portion of the reinforcement member. As the Examiner has cited no other reference and

Gleason has been shown as not identically describing the claimed invention, Applicant respectfully submits that the imposed rejection of claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 for obviousness based upon the Gleason is not factually viable and, hence, solicits withdrawal thereof.

Applicant has made every effort to present claims which distinguish over the prior art, and it is believed that all claims are in condition for allowance. However, Applicant invites the Examiner to call the undersigned if it is believed that a telephonic interview would expedite the prosecution of the application to an allowance. Accordingly, and in view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant hereby respectfully requests reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417, and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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